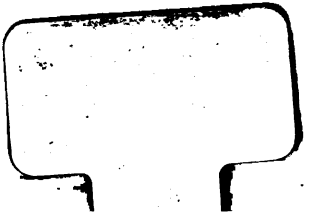
THE CRICKET TUTOR.



THE

CRICKET TUTOR.

BY THE

AUTHOR OF 'THE CRICKET-FIELD.'

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TO THE

CAPTAINS OF ELEVENS

IN

THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS OF ENGLAND.

CONTENTS.

THE CRICKET TUTOR.

FROM an early age Cricket was my favourite game. Well do I remember that as soon as I could escape from school on the Wednesday or the Saturday, our customary half-holidays, I used to tear away to the old Lansdown Cricket-ground, three miles off, and two miles dead against the collar — the hill being eight hundred feet high. This distance I used to accomplish with old Tom Forte, so sanguine was the heart within us, in three-quarters of an hour. Tom Forte was the founder of our School Club, and boasted throughout life that with his own hand he carried round the hat for the half-pence to tax our fellows to the extent of thirty shillings for our first set of bats, stumps, and ball. Well, Tom and I thought

that distance nothing to a Cricket-ground. We were rarely short of wind in those days, and were never tired; though some middle-aged gentleman in the Club was sure to take advantage of the willing animal, and let me do some of his fagging-out too. My master, luckily, was as fond of Cricket as his boys, and used sometimes to start — going out the back way, for fear the neighbours should make remarks — a full hour before the usual time, and would make a pretence of hearing us construe some of our 'Horace' lesson under the hedge, at the steepest part of the ground in Collier's lane.

These were happy times: we had just work enough to give zest to play, and looked forward to that future — the future of every schoolboy's sanguine hopes — when we should be our own masters and enjoy Cricket without limit to the end of our days. I cannot say that those days ever came to either of us,— not at least till all the superfluous strength and spirit which used to find vent in the Cricket-field had become barely enough and none to spare; for, poor Tom

weighs fifteen stone, he says, as he walks, and a great deal more when he runs; besides being steadied with eight children and a wholesale drug business in Mincing lane.

In those days there had only been about three Cricket Clubs in the West of England — one at Bath, one at Clifton, and one at Teignbridge in South Devon. These three were, at the time of which I am speaking, reduced to two; for the Bathonians had died of a surfeit, having spent all their substance on one grand dinner,—and though there was no doubt who ate the said dinner, there was a general attempt at repudiation when it was time to enquire who ordered it and had to pay for it; the consequence was that something very like a national bankruptcy took place,—the Club was broken up, and the field became all docks and thistles.

In this state of things, our school had the honour of originating the celebrated Lansdown Club, now of nearly forty years' standing. For our School Club, joined by W. C. Keating, Esq. and his friends,

afforded such excellent fun all the summer quarter, that those gentlemen resolved to carry on the meetings in the holidays, and thus formed, from our School Club as a nucleus, the identical Club which, for many years, played on Lansdown, and which now plays at Sydenham field, near the Railway Station, at Bath.

Since that time I have gradually subsided into an Umpire, or Looker-on, and have been allowed to be as good as ever in the theory, though want of wind militates against the practice. The last match I played was at Purton, near Swindon, and having the luck to be lamed by a sprain, I was allowed a runner. With his help I got on famously, and scored forty and not out; but the men vowed I should never have my running done proxy again. I forgot to say that I wrote to Tom Forte to come and revive old recollections, and play one match more before he died; but I little thought of the wear and tear of selling physic and the dilapidations wrought by Father Time. For Tom replied, as full of

fun as ever, that he was sorry he could not play, having a particular appointment on that very day to be — tapped for the dropsy!

Not long since, living near a school which we will here call Westfield, I was consulted about several points of practice while my young friends were training for their annual match. Some players of my own standing were frequently near, and used—to say the truth—to quiz and *quod vulgo* 'chaff' me for my enthusiasm; for, positively, as the day drew near, and my precepts were taking the form of action, I really did grow so delighted and so sanguine that I was as much a boy as anyone of the whole School Eleven. However, at last they paid me the compliment to say that my instructions were too good to be 'whistled down the wind,' and ought to be published for the benefit of the rising generation.

After much discussion, and the general number of opinions on both sides, the ayes carried the question — I took up my pen, cried, 'Here goes!' and, imagining my

favourite pupils near me, addressed them as follows: —

One great advantage you possess, if you will only avail yourselves of it, is in being within an easy distance of the London grounds. At Lord's and the Oval you may see the best of play. I call this no slight advantage; because good example is everything in Cricket, which, like many other things, is learnt by the eye—by a principle of imitation. However unconscious you may be that anything is running in your head, still new ideas will run there and form your ways and doings in Cricket, as in other things, according to the company you keep. No cricketer can play day after day among the finest models without learning their movements and adopting more or less of their style and carriage.

For instance, the Wykehamist fielding used to be something by itself—a style of its own and like no other fielding. To start before the ball was hit, to scoop it up and throw it in, all in one action, to the top of the stumps—this the Wykehamist used to

do like no one else. I am speaking of my Oxford days, from 1832 to 1836, when the University had always eleven Wykehamists who could play any eleven picked from the whole University. Their batting also was free, forcible, and manly; and in this also there was one well-known Wykehamish style, and they all played alike. This tends to convince me that there is something very catching in good play, and you can hardly see too much of it. I say, therefore, as rule the first—

Study the best models, and endeavour to imitate the action and the movements of the best players.

A really fine player must be free and elegant in his style. I am well aware that some of the most unsightly deformities—with shoulders up to their ears, all in a heap, with knees bent and elbows glued to their sides, as bad as anything in *Punch*, or in the picture of the 'All Muggleton' match in Pickwick—do make runs: but if so, all I have to say is, more's the pity! and vow and declare that the same men would make

many more runs if they only set about it in a more upright and a more becoming and sensible way. There is no denying that some men do contrive to write very well with their toes or their noses; but for all that you must excuse a man who cannot overcome an old-fashioned partiality for using fingers.

Never use too heavy a bat. — About 2 lb. to 2 lb. 2 oz. in weight is enough for any schoolboy. But I am not so well convinced that a 2 lb. bat is best for a powerful man. I remember James Dean once remarked to me very sagaciously, that one reason that the *Slows* were not punished as they used to be was, that the old-fashioned bat had disappeared; 2 lb. 10 oz. used to be only a moderate weight in the days of Slows and under-hand bowling, before the round-arm bowling taught a new generation to despise what indeed they had never learnt to play. The old bat used to be heavy at the point — very requisite for picking up a Grounder, or chopping upon a Sneak. Mr. Budd's famous hits, which drove back the ring repeatedly farther and

farther, on the Woolwich ground, where he scored nine for one hit over the bowler's head — hits like these were made with a bat 3 lb. in weight. One of the best of the amateurs ever known in modern days never used one of the lightest bats; but his bat, he said, always felt light in a match, because he generally used one rather heavier in practice.

Practise against under-hand bowling as well as against round-arm bowling: first, because the former is a game of itself; and secondly, because it necessitates the strongest defence and the most upright kind of play. Believe me that under-hand bowling is not to be despised: it is commonly very true upon the wicket, and you must never treat too lightly any ball that is straight. Add to this, it jumps and bounds about so much, that without a bat quite upright you cannot play it. The All England Elevens seldom play a match without putting on the Slows;—they call them 'Slows,' but Tinling's at Lord's would run down to the Pavilion if missed by Long-stop.

Only last year, at Lord's, at the Players' match, when Jackson and Wilsher were bowling, two of the best judges said, 'We could name a bowler of the old-fashioned kind who could have done good service here to-day.' Fuller Pilch, we allow, did once say, 'With under-hand bowling put me in on Monday morning and perhaps you will have me out by Saturday night;' but Pilch was formed on under-hand bowling: otherwise, we suspect that he would not have played as upright and straight as he was especially famed for playing.

I have myself had much experience with under-hand bowling. I began to play just as the new style was coming in, and when the old style of bowling had not quite gone out. At a later period, for some years, in North Devon, I headed a side with under-hand against round-arm bowling. The Teignbridge were our opponents, and once they played us with the strongest party they ever took from home; yet, an average of twenty-three an innings, about two each, was all that their Eleven could average in

two matches; and when they did beat us they brought up—hear it, ye Wykehamists of old!—the veritable Ned Poole, who knew all about it, and played in the old orthodox style. As to the rest, all they wanted was the use of the upright bat,—a thing more and more rare in these days.

Wisden is the only 'pendulum player' —the only man perfectly upright: indeed it is admitted, that no man in the two All England Elevens plays as upright as Wisden (who, said Lockyer, 'would have been thought much more of as a batsman if he had not been so good a bowler'); and if so,—if not as straight as Wisden,—since a man can be no more than upright, those not as upright as he is cannot play upright at all. In the All England Elevens, among comparatively upright players we may reckon Parr, Hayward, and Hearne. Still, though nearly as good, they are not in this respect quite equal in form to Wisden. The rest are efficient about in proportion to the uprightness of their play. I say, therefore, 'keep the left elbow well up' (this

was the old rule), and practise straight and upright play. If you play correctly, the bat will be as upright as the stumps, and whether you are hitting or stopping, the bowler will always find to his confusion and his cost that your bat covers a fair bat's breadth and a fair bat's height of the wicket. This alone is no slight defence: for, suppose that you fixed your bat upright in the ground, and that the bowler must get the ball past that bat before he could hit the wicket, surely he would find it no easy matter. Mr. Ward's bat was always covering his wicket in this way, and therefore he was an awkward customer to the last; whereas many a young man, quicker far in hand and eye, can never be depended upon to make as good a score as that celebrated old player made, even as late as sixty years of age!

As to gloves and pads, my advice is never to play without a cricket-glove on the right hand, at least. I cannot forget that once at Oxford a friend jumped off his horse just to bowl me a dozen balls. He proved

to be, unknown to me, a terrifically fast bowler; and as I met one of his fast Long-hops rather hard, and thus doubled the force of the ball, my two fingers were violently squeezed and bruised against the bat, even through a thick padded glove. Had my hand been gloveless, I have no doubt but the fingers must have been smashed.

This was done by an under-hand bowler, and under-hand is often the swiftest of all bowling; certainly the round-armed bowling flies about more, and is less to be calculated on than under-hand, and so far it is dangerous; but Messrs. Osbaldiston and Kirwan, as well as Brown of Brighton, whom Mr. Ward brought forward to beat Mr. Osbaldiston in his own game, these all bowled under-hand, and they were the most frightful men you could encounter in point of pace, and, if the ground was not true, it was anything but sport to play against either of them.

As to padding the legs, a pad on the right ankle is all you ought to require. It

is true that professional players pad both legs: but they cannot afford to lie by in case of accident, and they play so many matches that if they played without pads it would endanger one bruise on the top of another. Amateurs who do not play so much ought not to require so many pads. I could name some good players who have always played without any. I never in my life used any pad but a guard six inches long for one ankle.

Always stand as near the block-hole as you can without being before the wicket. In this case your eye will be over the middle stump, and you can judge the straightness of the bowling to a nicety. This alone will enable you to cover your off-stump with an upright bat and to avoid the common failing of giving catches to the Slips.

Of course, it is no use to take your stand near the block-hole, if, directly the ball is coming, you shrink away, as many young players do. What then becomes of 'guard?' The only use of taking guard is to know where your wicket is, and to feel how you

stand as regards the wicket and the bowler: once shift your foot, and this guard and this sense of your true position are lost.

This shifting the foot and shrinking away is difficult for young players to avoid. The only remedy I can advise is, to attend to your foot, and see that it is at the same spot after you have played the ball as it was before. Also, ask some friend to watch and tell you if you shrink or shift away from your wicket. For this purpose, if you employ a professional bowler, never let him bowl fast at first. Let him begin slowly, and increase his pace as you gain confidence.

And does a good player never move his right foot? A good player never moves his right foot, — that is, his pivot foot or fulcrum of his strength, — without a reason. One reason is, when the ball is much to the Off, and he moves his foot to Cut. The other reason is, when, the ball being pitched too far up, he steps in to make the most of his hit. Some players also step back with the right foot in back-play

to gain a better sight, but this is not indispensable.

With these two exceptions, a good player stands on his right foot like a pivot, and uses his left as his balance-foot, to adjust his position; and after he has played the ball, he finds himself resting on the same pivot-foot as at first.

This firm stand on one foot contributes essentially to hard hitting. The foot thus forms a firm fulcrum; whereas, while you are unsteady on your foundation, half your strength must evidently be thrown away.

'Look at that man—you see many such among bad players—he is like a bear on hot iron. He totters from one foot to the other. While the ball is being delivered, he takes as many steps as the bowler, and he has hardly the strength of a woman in hitting, after all!'

'Look again at Hayward or Parr, or any other good player. He stands firm as a rock, calm, and composed; he throws himself with unhesitating decision into the attitude suitable to command each length

and each kind of ball; and, when he hits, he hits with a will, and most determined manner; he realises the idea of a bold, *resolute* hitter, than which epithet none is more expressive of the most efficient style of play.

Once more: *Would you desire to have a good sight of the ball?* If so, keep your head steady, at one height and at one elevation, which steadiness the composed style above recommended alone can allow. For, where is the difference, whether you confuse your sight by intentionally bobbing your head up and down, or whether you do the same thing by tottering about upon your feet? No man who does not stand quietly and composed can give his eyes fair play; neither can he look intently and fixedly, concentrating his mind as well as his vision upon the ball.

It appears, therefore, that a young player may positively require to be taught how to use his eyes — how to see. Who shall say how much Cricket lies within the sphere of precept and of common-sense

instruction? Few persons are at all aware of the fact that no player can see himself. It is wonderful how many silly things a batsman may do without at all intending it. This self-delusion explains half the strange excuses a man makes for being out —excuses that would fill a volume. Indeed, the M.C.C. ought long since to have begun a collection in a ponderous volume kept for the purpose.

Therefore judicious assistance is very necessary, above all, for young beginners; because bad habits may easily be avoided at first, though they are very hard to correct afterwards.

Having taken your stand close up to your block-hole, or what is now more commonly termed 'guard,' *always while the ball is passing from the bowler's hand throw back the point of your bat to the bails.* Thus the end of the handle will point nearly towards the bowler, and the whole bat will be in a line drawn from your wicket to the bowler's hand.

The use of this position is, first, that

when the bat is once in the line of the wicket, there is no danger of its getting out of the line; in other words, you cannot help playing straight: whereas, if once you take up your bat across-wicket (you can easily try the experiment with a bat and an imaginary ball on the seam of the carpet), you cannot possibly bring it forward otherwise than across-wicket to the ball that you are at the time preparing to receive.

The second use of throwing back the bat to the bails is, that it necessitates *good wrist-play.* The bat must then be played to meet the ball instead of the ball striking the bat and falling powerless. This is another element in hard hitting: indeed, every block then becomes a hit; and the power of bringing the bat to meet and hit the ball will increase, till you will find, as they say of Parr, that his blocking of a ball is often equal to another man's hit.

The third use is, to gain greater quickness in defence. In back-play you will thus be in a position to meet, instead of following the ball, or running back after it.

Fig. 1

Preparing for Action.*

* The toes are too much before wicket, and foot hardly within the crease. Foreshortening suits our illustration better than artistic effect, the attitude being too stiff.

This position of the bat is most essential in dropping down upon a Shooter — and nobody can do this more safely and easily than Carpenter.

Never bat with a bent knee. 'But a boxer and a fencer are drawn in every picture with a bent knee.' True, but this is only while they are on the spring: in the act of a straight blow or a thrust the knee is always rigid enough—you should not even stand at guard with a bent knee. Look at Hayward's position in the frontispiece. The reason is that the limb, when bent, is on the quiver, and not easy and at rest: but, above all, when you take up your bat, you must draw yourself up to your full height, and play as tall as you would naturally stand. *Playing tall* is a great point in a batsman.

The use of this position is, first, that without a straight limb — as without a steady and composed one — you cannot exert half your strength or half your quickness.

An anatomist will tell you that an expense of muscular power is required to support

yourself on a bent limb, and, if so, you cannot use any other set of muscles (those of the arms for instance) except at a disadvantage.

This assertion is easily put to the test: take up your bat first with a bent knee and then with a straight knee—first stooping and then upright; try the experiment by an imaginary hit in your room—fireside anglers may be ridiculous enough, but a fireside cricketer may learn a great deal—and you will soon perceive that you have not half your power or quickness unless you stand up like a man, open your chest, lower your shoulders, and, in short, look as much to advantage as if you were having your Cricket-photograph taken.

Dakin, the player, was the first man who ever called my attention to this point; I have ever since observed that thousands throw all their height and half their strength away. Look, again, at Hayward: when he plays he looks every inch a man. Upright, composed, and easy, and with good wrist-play.—A *straight knee* must there-

fore be added to the other elements of hard hitting.

Again, with a straight knee and playing tall (much the same thing) you can command much more ground forward and much more ground in every direction in which the ball can come. Consequently playing tall improves your defence; because it enables you to smother or to drive away so many more balls at the pitch than you could otherwise command, before they rise abruptly, cut, or shoot, or otherwise become dangerous; and let it always be remembered as an axiom in batting, that *every ball is dangerous to play back exactly in proportion to the ease with which you could* (*by better reach*) *have played the same ball forward.*

Lastly, by playing tall and with straight knee you can judge the length of the ball better: for then you stand well above the ground, — you look down, as it were, into the angle made by the ball at its pitch. 'But did you never see Mr. X——, once a first-rate batsman, standing with his head just over the handle of his bat?' True, but

he was never a first-rate hitter: this attitude was his failing, and effectually took away from his power as a batsman: so this was all against him. It is true that in this position you may judge correctly as to the straightness of the ball, but this is no difficulty; whereas, the length of the ball is harder to judge when the head is low, because it appears all the more foreshortened. For, just as a man on a bridge above a railway can see the approach of the train far better than a man on the same level, so the man who looks down on the ball and ground together is assisted greatly in judging of the length or the exact distance of the pitch. Indeed, the rule admits of no exception, that in Batting, every attitude which looks awkward and grotesque implies a loss of power.

As to avoiding the bent knee and playing tall, there is no greater mistake than to suppose that a man must stoop and play low in order to have a good defence against Shooters. Because —

1. By playing tall, with longer reach for-

ward, you prevent the most dangerous balls from becoming Shooters by smothering them or meeting them at the pitch.

2. By playing tall, you compel the bowler to pitch shorter, and thus all the Shooters he can bowl will be less dangerous, allowing you a longer sight.

3. By playing tall and upright, you have greater quickness, having the free use of all your limbs. Only try the action of blocking, first in a stooping and then in a more upright position, and you will at once perceive the difference in point of quickness. No men were ever safer with Shooters than Wenman among the past, and Carpenter or Hayward among the present players, and they always played as we are recommending — tall and upright.

Having thus learned your proper position, with full reach as to the ground you can cover and with full command of all your limbs, the next thing is — to learn to Hit. For this purpose, you cannot do better than to fasten any kind of ball to a string, which may hang from the ceiling, or from a beam,

or, more conveniently, from a cord stretched across from one tree to another, so that the ball hangs about six inches from the ground, at the end of a string. If the string is fifteen feet long, so much the better; though half that scope for the oscillating ball will serve very well. A child's quartered soft ball will be better for a room, and an old cricket-ball in a piece of net — the more easily to attach it to the string — is better for the play-ground.

Well, all being ready, you can hit straight forward; you can Cut as the ball swings past you to the right, and hit round to the leg as it passes you to the left. You can also study the effect of *timing the hit*, the effect of wrist-play, and the effect of a free arm — not glued to the side, but working freely from the shoulder.

It will soon appear that there is one way, and one way only, to make the ball fly away like a shot, going so clean off the bat that you scarcely feel it; and this is the test of clean hitting — of the ball going off 'sweet.' You will learn, also, not to

grasp the bat too tight, and to hit with a kind of loose fling of the bat, which characterises all brilliant play, the bat appearing quite a feather-weight in your hand.

This we call our 'Chamber practice.' It is playing with a dummy: just as boxers learn to hit hard by practising upon a sack. All the time you are practising, be sure that you stand well upon your feet, and hit composedly and quietly. Do not try to hit beyond your strength; for unless you hit the ball at the right moment, and with the right part of your bat, no strength avails. There is only one way of hitting with a bat, namely, by whirling the bat in a circle, and the more rapid the whirl the harder the hit; and this rapid whirl, common sense shows you, must require a free and loose arm, and is much assisted by the wrists being thrown back so as to admit of being brought forward and becoming straight at the moment the bat meets the ball.—By this wrist-play you have virtually two actions instead of one.

The next exercise in the art of batting is

to procure some one to bowl to you. In the first instance, you need not mind how bad the lengths, provided the bowling is straight and within your reach. Play every ball in good form, as prescribed above, and endeavour simply 'to get your hand and eye in,' and to become used to judge of time, pace, and distance; in short, to gain experience. The first thing is to be able to hit and stop unscientific bowling.

To form the habit of hand and eye going together is one of the great points in Cricket-playing. In shooting you look at the bird, and the hand brings up the gun of itself — it unconsciously obeys the will, and follows the eye. This readiness marks the proficient in Cricket as in shooting. With the good player, every ball seems to dictate its corresponding position. There is one way, and one way only, to receive each kind of ball, and the good player forms himself at a glance in the posture required.

This habit — of hand and eye going together — depends on practice. In the middle of a season, while playing fre-

quently, there are certain hits which you feel you could never miss; but, if once you leave off practice for awhile you will miss a Long-hop, perhaps, and yet more likely a Home-toss. A Home-toss is often missed even by a good player, if he is not in practice, because he is apt to hit across wicket, and with some Tosses he cannot help doing so.

Wicket-keeping is good practice for hand and eye, and so also is fielding generally: for whatever causes you to watch the ball and to allow for its pace improves your batting at the same time.

By this time, I suppose you have attained all requisite power of execution — you can hit what you aim at well and strongly, that is, as far as it is practicable to hit anything; but now comes the question,— What to play for — What is there on the ball — When to hit and when only to stop; in other words, I must say something on the Science of the Game.

The first thing is to know, *when to play forward and when to play back.* Of course

in these instructions I presume that you have some one at hand to explain common terms. The best rule then is this: Stand with your right foot in your ground, and, in the manner and style of forward play, try how far from your ground you can plant your bat, while you hold it sufficiently inclined to keep the ball down. At this

Fig. 2

point, wherever it may be (adding two feet for the ball to rise without passing over the bat), make a mark by planting a feather a little out of the line of the wicket — a mark visible to the bowler, but not a mark to divert your own eye. When you have thus

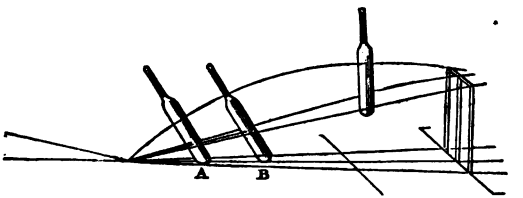
measured your reach, it will be evident that all the ground on your side of this mark is ground you can safely command, and every ball that pitches on it you can meet at this pitch, and cover, by one safe and simple forward action, in all its rising, shooting, or twisting propensities. Mr. Ward, even at sixty years of age, would not have missed one in a hundred of such balls; he would have counted all such far-pitched balls as safe to be stopped, if not to be driven away.

Having thus ascertained the length at which you ought to play a ball forward, the art is to carry this measured distance always in your eye, as a correct standard of judgement. This is difficult at first, because a ball never appears to the learner to pitch where it does pitch; but, if you doubt where any ball has pitched, you have only to ask, 'Which side of the mark?' and you will ascertain at once whether it was within reach and fit for forward play, or whether you ought to have played it back.

This sudden and almost intuitive perception of balls within or not within your

reach, is the great principle of good and safe play. For, when a ball pitches, for the moment you almost lose sight of it, and till it has risen, or come in a foot or two after the pitch, you cannot judge it again. Therefore, till you are a judge of lengths, and can form in an instant, either for forward or for back play, you will doubt when you ought to act, and 'if you doubt you are lost.'

Fig. 3



Old Lillywhite's famous trick in bowling used to be (as every bowler's ought to be) to bowl alternately nearer and farther from the critical length. He well knew, that if he 'could catch the player in two minds which way to play,' it would cause a mistake.

This diagram shows that the bat at A

by forward play stops or smothers a ball which, if played back, might come in six different ways. The player who can only reach to B ought to play back, because three balls out of the six would miss his bat if carried forward.

The best rule is to play every ball forward that lies within your command to play forward. But let me not be misunderstood. I am far from sanctioning the fashion of straining forward at balls which there is plenty of time to play back: but a man can never do wrong in forward play, when he can from his ground reach within two feet of the pitch of the ball, and that with ease, and with no risk of losing his balance. Good players can carry forward play even further still; but such things are not to be encouraged in learners. It is a good rule to say, 'When in doubt, play back,' because every ball may be stopped back, though many cannot so safely be played forward.

In the days of Pilch, forward play was all the fashion; and no doubt it was carried

too far. Wisden tells us that when he bowled to Pilch, Pilch would regularly lay down, before a forward bat, the identical lengths that Parr would by back play not only stop but play away.

But if play was once too much forward, now it is a great deal too much back. The reason is, we have not that fine spin and twist about the bowling which characterised Redgate, Cobbett, and Hillyer; we have not that exact pitch (every inch, as far as was possible, without pitching within the reach of the batsman) that characterised the bowling of Lillywhite.

When there is no spin upon the ball, a batsman will risk a kind of guess-hit, on calculation of the rise, and drive even good lengths to Long-field. Of course a Shooter or an awkward rise would be fatal. Parr and Carpenter never play for these guess-hits. Hayward will sometimes risk them, but with Caffyn they form half his game.

As to back play, the secret is to foresee at once that the ball must be played back and to prepare accordingly; remem-

bering, above all, to follow the ball with the eye right up to the bat, and to look steadily at it, fully prepared for its turning in or 'breaking back.' But too many players play at the pitch and not at the ball; that is, they present the bat according to the direction the ball has when it pitched, without considering that spinning bowling is always liable to turn in or to break away contrary to all expectation.

There is a way of making almost every block into a hit by wrist-play, in playing back; there is also a way of making almost all forward play into a Drive, by a forcible way of playing forward. To teach this, I can only give notice that it is to be done, and direct attention to the finest players to learn the way.

As to forward play, with an over-pitched ball every first-rate player knows how to *step* in—I say *step* in; for good players never *run* in with hop, step, and jump,—and thus to add force to his Drive; but no one before the maturity of University experience—no schoolboy—will do wisely

in leaving his ground. The chief reason is, that stepping in puts a learner out of form. Until you are very experienced in playing within your ground, you will spoil your play if you attempt to go out. Add to this, it requires an old head and much experience to discriminate *when* to step in. Once form a bad habit of stepping in, and you will be sure to do so, however strong your resolution first, and however great your vexation afterwards.

Avoid forming bad habits of play. And to this end, remember that a habit grows out of repeated acts. The sailor who was always tapping his biscuit against the table at sea to shake the maggots out, laid a bet that he would not do so ashore; but habit was too strong for him — his hand betrayed him into the old trick with the first biscuit he took up. Tricks of biting nails, also, or fidgeting with a button, we all know are habits which cannot be laid aside at pleasure. The habit of swiping at dangerous balls, and playing across wicket, as also the habit of stepping in, will be formed from a few hours'

loose play, and stick to you throughout life.

It is common to hear men say, 'If such a man only would be persuaded to play steadily, and not to hit when he knows it is dangerous, he would be a first-rate batsman;' but the truth is, this is not a matter of persuasion, of resolution, or of will; the man has formed a habit of wild play, and therefore he must play wild — by swiping across wicket, perhaps, or by cutting at straight balls — in spite of any resolution or any promise he can make to the contrary.

Timing the ball and allowing for the pace is another difficulty. This can only result from experience; still, experience teaches us all the faster when we are already aware what to look out for, and when we are alive to the danger to be avoided. Bad bowlers bowl much the same pace from first to last: they have no idea of giving a fast ball after a slow one; still less do they try a slow ball after a fast one — though the latter is the more deceiving of the two.

Another difficulty from this change of pace consists in the fact that a slow ball comes in more of a curve; it is more of what is called 'a dropping ball' than if bowled fast; and curved or dropping balls are calculated to deceive the eye as to distance.

In the Players' Match of last year (1861) I saw Parr as completely outwitted and done out of his innings as in any case I ever had the pleasure of witnessing. Buttress was bowling; his first ball was a fair ball, of quite a plain description, bowled at a good pace. The next was a ball bowled with the same action, and nothing to betray a change of pace — still the pace was very much slower, the ball higher in the air, dropping with a curve a little short. Parr let drive at it, hitting too quick, and judging it nearer than it really was. He hit over it, and the ball took his wicket.

Now, here was one of the best batsmen in England bowled out with an easy ball; — only because he forgot our rule, and did not time his hit correctly.

Some men are famed for quickness in back

play — no doubt, some men are by nature much quicker than others; still a slow man may be generally quick enough if he judges the ball right, forms in good time, and always remembers my advice to have his bat thrown back to the top of the bails, as the ball is being delivered.

Endeavour to form a MANLY *style of play.* In Cricket, what is not easy and worth looking at is not right. Ugly players have certainly in many instances made runs. In the same way, one-armed men, and even men with no arms at all, have done wonderful things; still, this is no argument against the right use of arms. Common sense dictates that a man should try to be not only as efficient as his neighbours who are slower and weaker than himself, but he should endeavour to do full justice to his own superior powers; and one sign that a man does not do full justice to his powers as a batsman is, when he looks stiff, or in any way awkward in his position or his play. Without encouraging anything like attitudinising or any affectation

of style more than results without thinking of it — my advice is, to observe and imitate the movements of men like Hayward, Carpenter, or George Parr.

It is commonly observed in the Marylebone Club, when men are freely criticising the play, that 'it is all very easy playing in the Pavilion.' It is quite a different thing to play a correct game at the wickets when eleven men are waiting to take advantage of your mistakes, and when hundreds of good judges are looking on.

This reminds me of the wide difference between the appearance a man can make on a mere club day and his performances in a good match.—The man who boasted that he could hit the stem of a wine-glass with a pistol-ball, was coolly reminded that it would make all the difference if the wine-glass could hold a pistol too.

The only security for playing well in a match is being used to play in one way, and one way only. A man who is always trying experiments is never perfect in any one style: he forms conflicting habits. The

steady player, who forms a habit of playing the same ball in the same way (and that the right way), is the only man who can be depended upon in a Cricket Match. This will explain the inferiority, as shown by score, of many who in practice appear brilliant hitters. The man who stops the first ball may live to hit the second; but that strong defence which keeps up the wicket till the right ball comes for our favourite hits to be made, is only to be proved when we play in earnest.

Defence is the one point in batting, without which no hitting can avail. There is an old saying among sportsmen, that if a horse has not good legs it is no use his having a good body. If a man cannot keep his wicket up, none of the runs he might have made will be found on the score-book. The fittest punishment of wild play is that which we all have felt — the tantalising disappointment of sitting in the tent looking on at many a ball we could have hit to a certainty, had we only stayed long enough at the wicket, patiently stopping the

good balls to have a chance at such bad ones. Therefore, we cannot too often be reminded of the rule—

Always begin an innings very carefully. Above all things, never allow yourself to be in a hurry about runs. The golden rule for a winning game is, 'Mind your defence, and the runs will come of themselves'—that is to say, if the runs will ever come at all, and there is any hit in you.

The reason for beginning carefully is, that you can never afford to take things easy while the time and pace of the bowling is still quite new to you, and while the ground, whether heavy or lively, remains to be tried.

The nature of the ground makes all the difference in the play of a batsman. Forward play with damp, dead ground can never be carried as far as on ground lively and smooth. Also, the time and quickness of a lively ground, compared with a dead ground, requires almost a game of its own.

A lively ground — witness, ye Etonians,

when you first play at Lord's — is as different from the heavy alluvial soil of a river meadow as a slate billiard-table is from a wooden one. Therefore, every Etonian should endeavour, before the great match of the year, to practise at Lord's, otherwise he may almost toss up for the runs; for sometimes the very tail of the Eleven make all the runs. I can, indeed, speak feelingly on this point; for I well remember that in the year 1836, full of sanguine expectation of the innings I might make, I played Oxford against Cambridge at Lord's. It was then we numbered among our opponents the names of C. Taylor, F. Ponsonby, and Broughton — than whom few more distinguished in the game ever made their first appearance at the same time — yet scarcely one of us could play our proper game. Some of the largest scores on both sides were made by comparative 'outsiders,' simply because we were not used to so quick a ground; the ball came into our wickets almost before we expected to find it within a yard of us.

Besides not being in a hurry for runs, *especially avoid letting your mind run on any favourite hit before you see what ball is coming*; for instance, some men are fond of Cutting, and, while anxious and yearning for a good Cut, they are always starting out of proper form; and perhaps at last they let fly at a straight ball, in their impatience at not having a chance at an Off-ball. Again, some men can never play straight, because they are always getting the right shoulder forward in their eagerness for a Leg-hit. In these cases, the mind being set upon one favourite hit, *the muscles follow the will.* By a mysterious law of nature, the 'wish is father to the *act*;' and let what ball will be bowled, however unsuitable, the favourite swipe is sure to be risked, to the great peril of the wicket.—This weakness is so well understood among old players that a good player will detect this yearning for one favourite hit, and bowl the contrary kind of ball on purpose. No one did this more frequently than William Clarke; indeed, no small part of Clarke's tactics con-

sisted in detecting what the player was bent upon doing, and then bowling him the very ball that should at once tempt and betray him.— Methinks at this moment I see him walking back and hear him say, 'There is going to be an accident this Over; I can see that from my last ball.'

I saw a striking instance of the fault of which I am speaking at Lord's last year. Diver, in the Players' Match, was bowled by Caffyn at the very moment I had remarked to a friend in the Pavilion, 'See, he is longing to poke the ball to the on-side. Let Caffyn repeat the same ball, and he will take Diver's wicket.' Caffyn *did* repeat the ball as we expected, and Diver was bowled! — In this case the ball of itself was an easy one to play, but the batsman was not in the proper frame of mind to play it; and it is curious to observe how spontaneously, as if without leave or licence, the limbs will act according to the will and inclination. So, *never think about which side you are going to hit till the ball comes.* Men who are famed rather for defence than for hitting are not

likely to commit this mistake. It is the eager and the sanguine player, and the man ambitious of a character as a fast 'run-getter' and a free-hitter,—above all, when the spectators are cheering some of his brilliant hits,—this is the man who is most likely to lose his wicket in his eagerness to send a second ball, where all cried 'Bravo!' as he sent one just before.

In one of the celebrated North and South Country matches one man was run out very foolishly.

'How came you to do that?' said Mr. Ward.

'Why, to tell the truth, sir, I had just hit Cobbett down to the Pavilion, and I was in too much of a hurry to get down to have another hit at his end.'

'Never mind,' replied the veteran; 'if you had that notion running in your head, you would have been bowled next ball if you had not been run out now.'

Having now spoken of batting generally, I will proceed to explain the several recognised Hits and the way to make them,

presuming, as before, that you have some elementary knowledge, or some one to explain modes of play with which every schoolboy is familiar. I deem it sufficient to limit my instructions to those rules and suggestions which would not so readily occur to yourself, and which might never be learnt without my assistance.

1. *The Drive, or hit straight forward, in the direction of Long-field.* — With underhand bowling this used to be the easiest hit of all, but with round-arm bowling it is always deemed difficult and a criterion of a fine commanding style of play. It is also most effective, because a driving player, like Griffiths or Stephenson, opens the field, and prevents the adversary from concentrating all his force behind home on one or two favourite points.

As to the Drive, (1) avoid 'Swiping,' or hitting the ball in the air. No doubt a bold hit high over every man's head has a dashing appearance, and with a man of the command of Pilch or Parr, it may be safely attempted; still even the best of

players is sometimes caught out with it, especially where the bowler has dodged him with a dropping ball. Every man, therefore, who plays with an eye to the score, and not the spectators, should cautiously avoid these dashing hits. The principle of making the Drive is rather to 'run the ball down with a straight bat' than to make a free hit. The latter can only be attempted when the ball is very much over-pitched. Just such a swipe we saw Mr. Fellowes make at Badminton, on the occasion of one of his Grace the Duke of Beaufort's Zingari matches—a hundred yards in the air, and I know not how much more, for the fourth run was turned as the fieldsman got up to the ball. (2) The art of brilliant hitting is neither to risk a catch by hitting the ball in the air, nor to waste your power by killing the ball against the ground. A good clean drive will generally ground about two yards or more from the bat; and in all hitting the angle at which the ball is hit to the ground is very important as regards hard hitting.

This is the point at which brilliant players are anything but safe; and, on the other hand, it is the point in which safe players are not always brilliant. Caffyn, on his lucky days, is a very fine hitter in this respect, hitting neither too much down nor too much up; still, as it is impossible to be perfect, this brilliant hitter is too apt to err on the side of a Catch, by the Swipe instead of the Drive.

As to Caffyn, he rarely does much at Lord's. One reason is, he has been hit in the face by a *bumping* ball, the ground being naturally very hard, which makes the slightest roughness produce great effect; this prevents him from facing the ball there as coolly as he should do. Such is the apology his friends make for him, and there may be some truth in it; but, besides this, the fault is evidently partly in his play. He hits 'between wind and water,'— that is, he plays too much by the Pitch, indulging in 'guess-hits,'— a kind of play which is often the most brilliant in its effect, though, amidst the cheers

of the ring, the good judge says, 'That is nothing but a blind swipe.'

When a man cannot hit by sight (as with Long-hops), he should never hit when he cannot command the pitch of the ball — never in expectation of what the rise will be. This kind of Driving is far more in fashion than it used to be, and the question is, Who is to blame?—The present system of play is far more for a merry life than for a long one at the wicket. The question is, how has this come to pass?

The explanation is that —

'They who live to please must please to live.' Every 'colt,' or young player, who comes out to earn a reputation at Lord's, must adopt the style which the public approves — and what is that style? The answer is shown in certain new expressions which we never used to hear; such as 'fast play,' 'slow play,' and 'a quick run-getter.' All we used to hear of was, 'Playing the game as it should be;' 'making all that was on the ball;' but now we hear of players being all very good, but 'too slow;'

and very little praise is given to a man who stands Over after Over, not to be tired out of his patience or his judgement, but waiting till the ball can be safely hit. No doubt versatility of talent, and a hit for almost every kind of ball, is a thing to be encouraged: and invention in Cricket, as in Billiards, deserves all due credit; but all this must come of itself: we would only point out that in batting 'the more haste the worst speed,' and ten runs made without a mistake are more creditable than twenty with one chance for every ten.

Considering what Cricket owes to the M.C.C., I would not for one moment speak disparagingly of the verdict of the Pavilion —comprising as it does the best judges in the land — when it pronounces in its true and responsible character. It has also been suggested that the mere hasty ebullition of the younger members claims indulgence, if it also needs a *hint* — or, perhaps, that voice which so greatly influences professionals (I speak advisedly) may proceed not a

little from those without, and ignorant lookers-on.

I remember a good observation from the celebrated William Clarke: he said we may practise good bowling too much. Some balls of a loose sort—Volleys, Long-hops, and Tosses—are necessary to keep us in practice if we would attain to brilliant hitting. For, bad bowling need not make a man wild, if he plays it in good form and steadily. But we must remember—men are often beaten by bad bowling because they take liberties with it; in other words, because, if the bowling is bad, they actually meet it with batting that is worse. No player should ever treat lightly a ball that is straight: Sneaks jump about and twist with the ground, and are always dangerous. Home tosses get both wickets and catches: Sneaks, as well as Tosses, are known to be so effective that they would be more frequently tried, were it not that it is so difficult to bowl good ones, and therefore the experiment costs too many runs for the wicket.

As to the position for the Drive, all young players should take care they find their right foot in its proper place when the Drive has been made.— Some men topple over a step or two with every Off-hit: some are always out of their ground after a Drive; which habit may do for a professional or practised player, but not for a learner, who will certainly lose his proper form of play.— The art of drawing in to make the most of a Drive must be learnt later.

As to Slow bowling, and the way to Drive it, we have not time to teach this necessary art in this place, but must refer to 'The Cricket-Field' (chapter viii.), simply observing that to step in to slow bowling requires great judgement, and, in Driving it, a good player should never lift it off the ground. 'The only way to hit me forward,' said Clarke, 'is to run me down with a full-faced bat quite upright.'—This is true of all slow bowling: it is not only the way not to be caught out; it is equally the way not to be bowled or stumped.

Off-hitting. — Of this, with round-arm

bowling, we need only mention two kinds. The one is more truly to be called Cutting, when the right foot is moved — the other, though also sometimes called Cutting, we will speak of under the name of Off-hitting — that style of hitting when the right foot or pivot foot remains fixed, and when the left foot is thrown across to command a reach of the ball.

As to the former kind — Cutting, — it can only be learnt by imitation and practice. Still, it will be useful to observe —

1st. That in using the bat horizontally the arm has very little power. Try the action of Cutting horizontally with a bat, and you will at once feel that your muscles act at a disadvantage; but try again the action of Cutting downwards, and you will perceive your increased power immediately. The rules for Cutting, therefore, are, first, always to Cut rather downwards, as adding to the force as well as to the safety of the hit.

2nd. The next rule is to Cut rather late: otherwise, you cannot bring the point of the bat to bear on the ball.

3rd. The third rule is to Cut by sight and not by guess: the latter being very dangerous. Some very brilliant players, Mr. Felix among others, used to Cut too much by guess—missing many balls and risking a catch.

4th. The certainty of your Cutting is very much increased by a habit of straight play. I have seen Wisden bring twice as large a portion of his bat to bear upon the course of the ball as ordinary players can do. Grundy does nearly (not quite) the same, and both of these players make many of the finest Cuts. A mere chop across the ball's course is not the most effective style; but, bring the point of your bat well from the top of the bails, with left elbow well up, and you will soon find the advantage in your score as regards Cutting.

As to Off-hitting, I am convinced that a tall man should play as Pilch did, and adopt no other kind of Cutting, but use this as a substitute for Cutting proper. Pilch almost always hit Off-balls in front of Point. He used to say that Mr. Felix and others

slipped their balls too much for his fancy. Pilch played, like Wisden, with bat perfectly straight, and being a much taller man — full six feet high — he could meet an Off-ball with the full length, and almost with the full breadth, of his bat.

One advantage this Off-hitting affords over Cutting is, that it does not require your original position to be altered — you still remain standing on the right and balancing yourself with the left foot. Whereas the Cut proper requires so complete a change in the position as materially to affect the firmness and stability of your defence: for, here the right foot has to move, and the right shoulder comes forward instead of the left: and when all this is done, you have not half as much power as when the left foot only is moved.—This was one reason that Pilch hit so hard to the Off. The position of Saunders, one of the finest Cutters (as he was called, but he never made the real Cut) ever seen, was exactly the same in his Off-hits: he crossed his balance foot over and brought the full power

of his shoulder to bear upon the ball. The same also was the position of Felix — not always, but when he made those most powerful hits for which he was so famous. — Saunders, like Felix, was left-handed.

Again, a tall man may stride forward to the pitch of many an Off-ball, after the manner of Leg-hitting, and with much force hit it before it has had much time to rise. In this hit all the power of the shoulder is brought to bear in a way unknown in the usual Cut.

The Draw has gone rather out of fashion. Hearn and Wisden both make the Draw, simply because they both play upright: and, with an upright bat, a ball working away only a little way to the leg will, as you play back to guard your wicket, make the Draw of itself. This happens most frequently with underhand bowling: indeed, no man can play underhand bowling well who cannot Draw. And with round-arm bowling, for a left-handed player — I speak *feelingly* — the Draw is quite indispensable, because so many balls, for which he must

prepare as if straight, work away to the leg. With others the round-arm bowling is found to require a position so well up to the wicket that the hit more generally available is that hit, so common among professionals, which plays the ball away to the On-side — appearing like a hit across the right leg. A perfect player should be able to make both hits, for neither is suitable for every ball. A man who cannot Draw is likely sometimes to play the ball into his wicket, besides giving more chances to the Slips.

All we can teach of the Draw is, that it is called a 'Draw' in ignorance of the way to make it; because when the Draw is properly made there is no draw in it—no drawing of the bat at all. The bat is brought forward from the top of the bails as full as possible to meet the ball; and then, if the ball works to the leg, the ball must *draw*, or glance away of itself. Therefore, there is never any danger in the Draw proper, if you only know how to make it, as it should be, with a kind of 'hanging

guard,' and without in the least uncovering your wicket.—The way in which the Draw is commonly attempted, by sawing the bat edgeways, is dangerous enough, with little chance of runs.

The Leg-hit.—I presume you all have seen this hit frequently made. It is made by striding forward with the left foot to the pitch of a ball (when pitched near enough to be reached), and hitting it square to the leg before it has time to rise so high as to be unmanageable. As to leg-hit—

1. You must never try this forward hit with any ball of which you cannot command the pitch. Pilch, in his later days, was thought a bad leg-hitter, only because he would not risk a catch by what Lord Frederic Beauclerk called 'a blind swipe'—that is, a leg-hit made by guess and venture—by a wild sweep of the bat, which takes the chance of the ball passing in the way of the bat at the moment of its swing.

The number of men caught at 'long-leg' is very great. With good players an extra man is always sent down directly they see

the batsman eager for this hit. I have seen the All-England Eleven against Twenty-two put as many as three men down to long-leg to meet the case of an eager leg-hitter. So, never try a forward leg-hit unless you can command the pitch, or you will be caught out.

But, when there is a command of the pitch, Parr has two different hits, both good ones, according to the length of the ball; and this choice of hits gives Parr a great advantage over other players, who commonly have only one forward hit for every leg-ball. One of Parr's hits is to make a kind of sweep with the point of a horizontal bat (only to be done when he can reach to the pitch of the ball); the other — when he cannot reach quite so far — is to hit across his advanced leg with a bat nearly parallel with the leg, so as to intercept the ball before it has time to rise above a foot from the ground.

All balls that cannot be reached far enough for either of these two hits — that is, all short-pitched leg-balls — should be played back.

As to these short-pitched balls to the leg, if they are very short-pitched or long-hops, and if you can hit them by sight, well. If not, here again beware of a blind swipe: for, it is very likely to hit the ball into the hands of the long stop, and often to send it spinning over to the Point or Slips. If you cannot hit these balls by sight, don't hit at them at all. Indeed, they are hardly worth hitting at.—Even in an All-England match, you do not see any man hit one in six of these short-pitched leg-balls; and the wild attempt swings a man out of all proper form, and he may lose his defence and his straight play for the rest of the innings. Experienced bowlers always calculate that leg-hits are often the prelude to cross-play and a falling wicket.

This effect of swinging round after leg-balls—too wide to be hit, except rarely and by accident—is too little considered. Men waste their strength as well as their steadiness, and a batsman has no such powers to spare. And as to catches, Pilch was so often caught off these balls in early

days, that at last he left them alone altogether. My own practice was, save with a manifest long-hop, never to swing round after these balls. I believe that, directly or indirectly, the loss is greater than the gain: chiefly, because you lose in steadiness and good form.

Short-pitched leg-balls with fast bowling are so difficult to hit that in the All-England match, in 1860, when Carpenter scored ninety-seven, I do not think he hit one of the short-pitched to the leg in his whole innings, though I have seen him more successful since. Caffyn, who was standing by when I made the observation, said, 'Still, sir, I think they can be hit;' and the very first that Jackson bowled him he hit most brilliantly for four runs. But Caffyn's innings, unlike Carpenter's, was a short one — resulting, as usual, from his too great eagerness to hit. Indeed, there is rarely a player to be named in all England who can combine this wonderfully quick hitting of leg-balls with a strong defence — simply because the mind must be set upon

hitting instead of on defence; and, if so, the muscles are apt to start and vibrate in the direction of the will (as before explained), almost in spite of all our resolution to resist.

Pilch and Parr were fine, steady, powerful hitters; but coolness and composure characterised their strong defence. As to Caffyn's powers as a player, whoever sees him make a long innings at the Oval, a ground he can depend upon, sees quite a picture of energy and quickness, and most lookers-on are delighted to find him at the wicket; still, Caffyn's play, if it suits Caffyn, would answer with scarcely anyone else. Parr is a better model for a learner. Wisden, though less brilliant, is one of the best to imitate, and quite as good to copy as Parr, because his play is rather straighter. For, *Parr does not play quite straight* — not as straight as Pilch or Wisden, as any eye will detect; therefore not *quite* straight. Still — not to detract from the performance of so fine a player — Parr plays *nearly* straight, and has greater readiness for leg-

hitting than Pilch ever had; and this readiness will always take a little from the straightness of any man's bat; and therefore, with due allowance for an 'all-rounder,' we can scarcely take any exception to the play of George Parr.

As to comparing Pilch and Parr, 'Pilch's off-hitting,' said Hillyer, 'was something to make a bowler mind what he was about, before he risked an off-ball, — far more than with Parr.' Mr. Felix will not allow that Parr ever played as well as Pilch, on a fair comparison being drawn when each was at his best. Wisden, who has bowled to both, thinks otherwise. But the general opinion of the M.C.C. is that, considering the bowling which prevailed during Pilch's day, no one can say that Pilch was not quite as effective as Parr, though in a different style of play. But Pilch was not the only great batsman of his day. Wenman's innings was to many as great a treat as Pilch's. The best judge of batsmen is the bowler, who has frequently bowled to them, and Wisden agrees with me that

Wenman held as strong a wicket as Pilch. Wenman's back play was equal to anything I ever saw, and perfectly straight. He was one of the few men who could deal readily and safely with Redgate's Shooters on hard ground, never more exemplified than in the famous North and South Country Matches of Mr. Mynn's day — 1836.

Hitting on the On-side. — The power of hitting to Long-field On marks a free and fine player. 'It shows,' said Carpenter to his pupils at Marlborough, 'that a man has the proper use of his left arm.' The way Carpenter 'pulls' Jackson and the fastest bowlers over to the On-side is remarkable. From an inability to do this, many men block nearly all balls Off, where there are many men to stop them, instead of On, where there are so few. This enables eleven men to stop as many of their hits as thirteen men would do with a better batsman. But this is a point to which we can only pretend to direct attention. Pen and ink cannot impart all we would say. Suffice it to give notice that a secret worth knowing lies in this direction;

use your own eyes and observation, and you will find it out for yourself.

As to practising with a bowler, always remember that if you are not learning you are unlearning; if you are not taking pains to form a right system and habits of play, then all your sky-larking will infallibly confirm you in ways that are wrong; and a bad habit in batting is like something tickling at your elbow, and making you do exactly the very thing which you had resolved to avoid; and thus, in almost every game, far from enjoying yourself, you find your innings a source of constant vexation and disappointment.

And now, about Batting I have said all that time and space will allow. I can proceed no further, but must refer anyone who has already gone with me so far, for more on the same subject, to chapters vii. and viii. in 'The Cricket Field,' where I have the advantage of diagrams to explain my precepts.

On Bowling also, for the same reason—want of diagrams and space in these pages—I must refer to the same book, chap. ix.,

though the following hints will be found very useful: —

1. Young boys should not attempt to bowl at twenty-two yards, but should begin at about sixteen, increasing to eighteen, and so on to the full distance as they grow older and stronger.

2. Addressing myself to 'big fellows,' I would advise you never to bowl beyond your strength — that is, at a pace which requires an unnatural exertion; for, how can anyone have precision when straining with all his might?—As to the most desirable pace for all grounds and all weathers, a moderate degree of swiftness certainly is desirable, unless you are professedly a slow bowler. Still, if the pace is in you, it will come of itself; if not, you will spoil all by trying at too much.

But fortunately almost all men can comfortably and easily attain to the pace of Caffyn; and, believe me, this is about the pace at which great things have been done in bowling. Witness Lillywhite (the first), and Broadbridge slower still than he, as

also Cobbett and Hillyer, and last not least Buttress, who on his best days can bowl as difficult a ball as any man ever did bowl.

At medium pace: 1. You can attain greatest accuracy of length and straightness. 2. You can bowl with more 'spin' in your delivery. Now 'spin' is everything in bowling; without it — that is, unless the ball goes spinning from the hand and revolving in the air when it pitches —it will come up dead and slow, not quick and lively — and what is worse, there will be no variety, but every ball will seem nearly the same. The more dangerous propensities of the ball, whether shooting, cutting, twisting, breaking back, or sudden and abrupt rise, will all be impossible, save by an accident and from the roughness of the ground: nothing of the kind can result from a dull non-spinning delivery alone.

As to a spinning delivery, I have seen a ball from Cobbett, after I had blocked it, spinning like a top about the crease; I have had a ball from Mr. E. H. Budd (the great batsman and slow bowler of former days,

who had a lively delivery) rise over my shoulder and tip off the bails, touching them only on the wicket-keeper's side! Now this spin can never be nearly as great with very fast bowling, for the speed tends to annihilate the effect of the spin, and fast bowling is rarely found consistent with a spinning delivery, though there have been exceptions: witness Mr. Fellowes. The most remarkable instance of a spinning bowler among fast bowlers was Redgate; but even with Redgate it was when he dropped one of his slower (and therefore more spinning) balls in the middle of a fast Over that he did the greatest execution. Redgate's delivery was very fair — not quite as low as Cobbett's, but still nearly horizontal; and a high delivery, where the ball is not sent forth with some lively action of the hand, but comes down like Jackson's, and yet more like Wilsher's, cannot have nearly as much spin as bowling more nearly on a level. An actual throw has no spin at all.

Slow Bowling. — One of the numerous advantages in the game of Cricket is that it

affords a sphere for qualifications of all kinds. Many a man may be a slow bowler who cannot be a fast one. And, believe me, slow under-hand bowling is well worth learning; for, I have rarely played in any country match without seeing at a glance that anything but 'slows,' with one or two men at least, were a waste of time and a waste of runs besides. William Clarke has often said, and said truly enough, that had he been playing, as once intended, at the Great North and South Country Match at Leicester, when Mr. Mynn made his great innings, nothing is more certain than that he could have saved a hundred runs; 'and yet,' said Redgate — admitted to be the most difficult bowler to play in the memory of living men — 'that day it was no use bowling well to Mr. Mynn — one of my best balls was a certain hit for three or four.' Still a slow, lobbing bowler, such as many a boy would score from, would, at one time, have summed up Mr. Mynn for a very few runs.

Peace to his ashes! May they, as now

proposed, be honoured with a worthy monument! Whether in the Cricket field, or in the social circle looking on, the men of Kent and Surrey will attest, 'We ne'er shall look upon his like again;' however true it may be that, at the crisis of his fame, he might have succumbed to a dodge whom men strove in vain to master by fine play.

Captain Palmer, of the North Devon Cricket Club, had a very accurate system of bowling—tossed up seven or eight feet in the air, and dropping with considerable curve. It looked almost child's play; it had no twist, and was as easy as easy could be; a cripple might have played it: only—it wanted *knowledge*. I have no doubt, as Caldecourt once remarked of something similar, that, with five men at least out of many a county Eleven, this plainest of all slow bowlers would have ended the innings for fewer runs than an average professional would have done.

Slow over-hand bowling, dropping with a high curve, is very valuable. The effect of the curve in bowling, and all the many

dodges and arts for deceiving the eye of the batsman, and taking advantage of points not only physical but even metaphysical —the erratic thoughts and inclinations of the mind, as well as the awkward tricks of the body — must all be studied in 'Cricket Field,' chapters viii. and ix.

Fielding.— It is a great mistake to think and practise as if batting were the whole of Cricket. Games are won rather by saving runs, which a good fieldsman can always do, than by getting runs, in which the best batsman is sometimes out of luck. Add to this, good fieldsmen are almost essential to good bowling; once disgust your bowler by missing the catches for which he plays, or not saving his errors in bowling from running up the score, and you will have no more first-rate performance from him that day.

In the match of Oxford against Cambridge, some ten years since, my friend M. B. was made so nervous and irritated by seeing repeatedly his catches missed, that he could not go on bowling any more, though he was the best bowler on the side. In this instance

there was a great mistake made in choosing the men. That some of those who had the honour of representing their University at Lord's were not good in the field, was admitted: but their friends pleaded that what they lost in fielding they would make up in batting. They did not consider that the whole force might become demoralised, and that such loose screws virtually disorganised the whole machinery.

Let us take cases that commonly occur. A bowler plays sometimes purposely to produce a catch to Cover. Imagine his feelings when the identical chance is given, but Cover misses the catch!

Or, suppose a bowler attacks the leg-stump, aware of his liability by the least deviation to produce a Leg-hit to his cost. Perhaps this Leg-hit is actually made, but a good man at Long-leg covers the ball and returns it for one run. But what if he misses it, and the bowler finds that his experiment has cost four runs to the score? Surely, such a bowler must feel greatly crippled in his resources of attack, and must

probably give up trying the most effective kind of ball, simply from want of support in his fieldsmen.

As to the Public School Elevens chosen for Lord's, I would especially recommend that talent in fielding be made the chief qualification; because, with all young players, the novelty and excitement of the scene, strange bowling, and yet stranger ground, and perhaps a little more nervousness than they would like to acknowledge—all place the score of the best batsman very much within the sphere of chance. And young players have little idea of the discouraging effect—the positive damper that comes over an Eleven—with five thousand spectators to cry 'Run it out,' when one of their fieldsmen misses a ball. The cry of 'Well played,' 'Well stopped,' puts powder and nerve into your bowler, but the other cry takes it out of him. This is true even of old players; but with the young, the error is all but fatal to the match. For there is no game that depends so much on confidence as Cricket: while sharp fielding lasts, your luck lasts,

but an army demoralised is an army routed. Every experienced Cricketer could quote many cases in point. How often have we seen runs very scarce, perhaps only at the rate of one in three or four Overs for the first hour; when all of a sudden there has been an overthrow or some mishap, quick running has soon become the order of the day; and the telegraphic score once set going, stop it who can?—two or three runs an Over mark the remainder of the innings!

Such is the influence—indirect far more than direct—of one bad fieldsman. It is quite a fallacy to say Slowcoach is worth six or seven more than Sprightly, and it is hard if in the field he loses more than three of them; the truth is, Slowcoach may be the very man that spoils it all!—This remark applies to all matches more or less, but never so forcibly as to those exciting games played in public, before all the best judges of the day, in which young hands strive, and young hearts palpitate, and all for the honour of their school—the 'old

fellows' as well as the new—on the far-famed ground of the M.C.C.

When you take the field, let not one word be spoken; for it acts upon the bowler just as audible whispering acts upon a public speaker; it betrays want of earnestness and sympathy, and thus effectually paralyses his energies—for a bowler, from the first ball of the Over to the last, ought to be 'a pure abstraction.' Some time since, I asked two or three of the most experienced managers of the Zingari to tell me what they considered the chief point in a good Captain of an Eleven.

They at once replied, 'To make your Eleven play up to the mark—their hardest and their best—from the first ball to the last.' They spoke chiefly of the side fielding out.

I was immediately reminded of a match I had then recently played with my old friend, John Marshall, Esq., of Bath—a man whom now we mourn among those passed away—at Kingscote, in Gloucestershire. That day he headed a 'Lansdown' Eleven,

the Kingscote Club having been our friends and foes for full thirty years.

On that occasion, we put the Kingscotians in to get one hundred runs to win; they ran up the score to ninety in less than two hours. Then the cry was raised, 'Only ten runs to win!' From that moment we were all screwed up to concert pitch. More than half an hour we fought for seven of those runs only, and eventually won the match by three, though their best hitter remained in to the last.

Every old player will, with this hint, recall many a hard-fought field when the last runs cost twice as much time, and twice as many balls, as those preceding; and what if the whole match had been played in the same spirit and with equal concentration of all our powers?

When the United Eleven played Twenty-two of the Lansdown Club at Bath, in 1858, it remained for the Eleven, on the last day, to put the Twenty-two out for a smaller score than they had made in their first innings. I asked them what they ex-

pected would be the result. Lockyer and Wisden replied, 'You will see, sir, that when we are all sharpened up at a pinch like this, it always does make such a difference.'

Therefore, do not think it superfluous, my friends, if I remind you to be sure you play your hardest. A word spoken, or a man with a cigar in his mouth, or any child's-play or 'chaff,' is sure to let off the steam, and, by producing lax play, may even alter the complexion of the whole game.

Such being the value of good fielding, I will now give simple rules for learning it.

'*For learning fielding!*' some one will say. 'We have heard of learning the way to bat; but fielding comes of itself.'

If fielding does come of itself, I can only say it is a long time coming, and that with the majority it never comes at all — no fielding, at least, of the kind to turn the fortune of a match. The truth is, there is nothing in which more is done by being set the right way about it, than in fielding. To watch the movements, and to imitate

men like John Lillywhite, Caffyn, Bell, and Carpenter, is the first thing, or you will hardly understand my precepts. Happily, there is no want of good models. Still, there are two points in which some even of the best men of the day may learn a lesson.

1. 'Watch the batsman and the ball, and be ready to start before the ball is hit.' — 'How very trite! who did not know that?' Very likely: but it is one thing to know, and another thing to do it; and I am convinced that on this point an admonition is much wanted, even by All-England players! Other men have stumped as cleverly as Mr. Herbert Jenner, but no one had ever a higher reputation for anticipating all that the batsman would do. Other men have been as quick at point as Mr. R. T. King, but Mr. King's great superiority consisted in always 'being thereabouts,' starting in time and anticipating the ball.

2. Not only run in and meet the ball, but run on until you do meet it. Do not run in a yard or two, and then stop for

the ball to come to you. Not one fieldsman in a hundred comes up to my idea in this respect: and, if not, he cannot save the one run standing nearly as far off as he might do. Besides, you will find by practice that the impetus gained by your continued running in gives you force and quickness in returning the ball. I am well aware that on rough ground this kind of fielding may be more dashing than safe. But, at all events, you should learn this style of fielding, and practise it afterwards as you please.

Fielding consists in Stopping, Catching, and Throwing, as also in Running.

As to *Stopping*, go behind any man's wicket and practise Long-stopping. You will do well to take that point in the game whenever you are allowed; for Long-stopping requires clean fielding and quick return. In Long-stopping, never adopt the old fashion of going down on one knee; for then you are fixed, and any sudden bound of the ball leaves you all abroad. The proper style is to keep your heels together.

Study the hints for Long-stop contributed by one of the best of his day in the 'Cricket Field,' chapter x.

When you can Long-stop pretty well, standing in the usual line behind the wicket, try to do so at a disadvantage, standing some yards (more or less, as your facility increases) to the right, and then to the left of the line of the wickets. You may even try the same diagonally, and thus practise all the varieties of covering a ball, or 'taking it in your run' sideways, which can occur in actual play. You can also stand (all this, of course, I only mean upon a practising-day) too far behind the wicket, and try to make up for lost time by running in, as recommended above.

That the ball in some places in the field, at Cover and Long-leg especially, curls round and requires allowance for that curling, I need only remind you, and advise that you practise accordingly.

Catching.—Practise throwing in a ring or, what is better still, I would say to any Captain of a School Eleven, practise catches

from the bat.—Put a man in the middle of a ring formed by your Eleven, and let some one toss the ball to him that he may hit catches on all sides. For the ball feels very different—and it is less easy to time it and allow for the pace—off the bat than when simply thrown.

Easy catches are often missed. It is worth while to know distinctly why: *because you do not draw your hands back*, and no catch is so easy as to be safely made with unyielding hands.

Practise left-handed catches, and the right hand will take care of itself. The same applies to left-handed stopping.

Practise, also, jumping off your feet and catching a ball in the air, when it would otherwise be out of reach. The secret of this is to take pains that the ball shall meet the middle of the hand, at the bottom of the fingers, for then the hand will almost close upon the ball of itself.

Practise running in to a ball that would ground short of you—pat it up in the air, and catch it at the second attempt. This

is well worth learning, and constitutes a very brilliant piece of play to do good service in a match.

Practise, also, missing and 'slobbering' a ball, and the ways there are to save it when another man would not know what to do.

The Captain of an Eleven should devote three or four evenings to practise his Eleven in fielding, while two men are put in to tip and run. This will soon show men what their fielding is worth — so very clean must be the picking, and so very quick must be the return to get a wicket, when two men are determined to try the run.

This practice will especially test the excellency of your throwing.

As to *Throwing.* It was once the rule of the Wykehamists to limit some privileges in Cricket to those who had qualified by throwing a certain distance. Throwing the distance was, with Cricket, what at Eton swimming the distance is with the boats.

Quick, arrow-like throwing — no time lost high in air, but with as small a parabola

as practicable—is essential to effective fielding. You must learn to throw 'with the first intention,' or with a single step at most: 'up and in' is the rule. A return at a hundred yards from Long-leg of course claims exception; but some of the longest throwers can throw with a single step, and almost without any apparent step at all.

Having attained to the power of throwing, how are you to use it? Why, never return a ball with a Long-hop, if you can throw nearly breast high to the wicket-keeper. This is a very bad habit, though a very common one—losing many a chance of a run out. Still it is better to throw in a Long-hop than to risk throwing to the feet. But, remember, if you must throw a Long-hop, be sure you throw a good one: send the ball skimming—as John Lillywhite does, though he is no great thrower—and do not let it lose its force and speed against the ground. The fielding of a certain Wykehamist Eleven, in 1827, numbering R. Price, F. B. Wright, Knatchbull, and Meyrick—names by no means forgotten at

the present day—was for years after mentioned with enthusiasm by Mr. Ward and his friends as one of the finest things of the kind ever seen at Lord's: I remember Cobbett's specifying that the throwing was inimitable all round.

These remarks are quite enough to convince you that any throwing worthy of a Cricketer must be somewhat of a study.

And lastly, as to running, we need say nothing about pace, in which no rules can be of much avail; but the art of starting quickly to left as well as right, as also the power of springing well without loss of balance—all this forms a kind of gymnastics, in which practice will improve as much as in any other exercise. And now, referring to the tenth chapter of the 'Cricket Field' for further hints on the same subject, and, not least, for the art of running between wickets, and becoming a good judge of a run—no slight point in the character of a thorough Cricketer—I must bid my young friends Farewell.

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